DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 230 039 FL 013 702

AUTHOR Hughey, Jane B.; Wormuth, Deanna R.
TITLE Freeing the Language Learner: The How and Why of a More Powerful Vocabulary.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 26p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (17th, Toronto, Ontario, March 15-20, 1983).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Learning; *Class Activities; Context Clues; *English (Second Language); Experiential Learning; Higher Education; *Language Skills; *Learning Activities; *Second Language Instruction; *Vocabulary Development

ABSTRACT

College and university students in English as a second language classes need to acquire an active and fairly extensive vocabulary rather quickly. Methods of learning such as analysis and memorization of word lists, word building, and dictionary use can be combined with methods of gaining vocabulary by becoming familiar with it and using it in realistic contexts. This methodology includes strategies for learning words, learning about words, and learning sensitivity to words. The strategies are lined up with the four stages of language learning, namely, mechanical skill development, transfer of pattern, true communication, and creative language use. The strategies involve development of a personal learning style, an active approach to learning, and an outgoing approach to the target language. Teaching techniques help students to acquire these strategies and develop their inference skills. Generally, this means that students must have extensive contextual practice on all levels of language proficiency and use. A model curriculum is attached which uses these strategies and methods, and which presumes the adult students' experiential base. (AMH)

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FREEING THE LANGUAGE LEARNER: THE HOW AND WHY OF A MORE POWERFUL VOCABULARY

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FREEING THE LANGUAGE LEARNER: THE HOW AND WHY OF A MORE POWERFUL VOCABULARY*

Jane B. Hughey and Deanna R. Wormuth

Freeing the language learner addresses the integration of several used methods of teaching vocabulary. By combining (1) the methods of learning such an analysis and memorization of word lists, word building and dictionary use with (2) methods of acquisition such as gaining vocabulary by becoming familiar with and using it in realistic contexts (Stevick, 1982), L_2 students are freed to quicken their learning pace and strengthen their overall language skills. This paper presents a theoretical base for focusing on vocabulary as a continuing primary factor in L_2 development and offers a model vocabulary curriculum.

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Why a more powerful vocabulary? First, vocabulary is the basis of language. It provides greater control of the language through clarity, the ability to influence others through word choice, and deeper levels of communication through variety. Second, the learning, and especially the acquisition, of vocabulary is a slow and demanding task even for native speakers. How then is ESL learning and acquisition of vocabulary unique? While most native speakers assimilate a wide range of vocabulary over an extended period of time and continue to add vocabulary gradually to meet their communicative needs, adult ESL students begin L_2 vocabulary accumulation later and with less intensity and practice. Yet depending on their specific purposes, they often need as much or more facility with the language as native speakers.

In spite of their academic exposure to English vocabulary, when students leave the secure confines of the ESL classroom and enter English-speaking settings where they will live, study, or work, they often find themselves "at a loss for words," (Baxter, 1980: 326) words they need to achieve their goals and objectives. Why does this situation exist in our language programs? Language teachers frequently treat the presentation of words as a relatively unimportant facet of L_2 learning. They ignore vocabulary or teach it haphazardly, assuming that students will somehow, magically, absorb it. In addition, few educators have been able to agree on how to teach vocabulary, much less on which specific items to include beyond the basic list of 1500.

However, because of ESL learners' needs, vocabulary must be given greater prominence in the overall L_2 program through the development of an effective, integrated vocabulary curriculum. Shifting the emphasis to include an integrated vocabulary curriculum will result in 1) rein-

forcement of other language skills - listening, reading, speaking, writing, and grammar; 2) a more rapidly acquired and extensive vocabulary; and, ultimately, 3) freedom for language learners to continue a more effective and efficient assimilation of vocabulary after they leave the classroom.

No doubt, words are important tools for effective communication: for saying what we want to say, for understanding, and for being understood. ESL students recognize this importance. Generally, ESL students of all ages, levels, and backgrounds are highly motivated to increase their word power. They need no convincing because most of them have undertaken the language voluntarily, usually for specific purposes. Some of these students are learning for integrative purposes, that is, to enter into and particiapte fully in the life of an English-speaking community; others are learning for instrumental or pragmatic purposes, to acquire the specific information required for a degree, research, or career. Perhaps the largest group many of us directly affect is the secondary, college, and university students who seek educational opportunities in English-speaking cultures. It is the pragmatic needs of these students that we address. These students are studying principally for instrumental purposes. And although some will remain in the English-speaking culture and integrate into it, most are intent on one objective - - to obtain an education and return home as quickly as possible. Thus, they need language skills as quickly as possible too.

Because of the unique conditions under which they function, the language burden is greater for these students than for most others. They have a number of limitations and requirements in conjunction with their goals for higher education; for example, some study under rigid time

constraints imposed by their governments or companies; some have limited funds; and some have left families behind. For these reasons, most are in a hurry. There are other requirements placed on ESL students by our English-medium educational system. As Pearson (1981: 414) states, they must be able "to read and follow directions, to get through large quantities of reading material without wasting time on unnecessary details, and to use the structure and organization of a text as well as underlining and notetaking as study aids. They need . . . to be able to write cogent essays, term papers, and reports (technical and non-technical), to take effective lecture notes, to revise their own written work, and to take various kinds of examinations under the pressure of time." In many cases, they must also be able to lecture so that others can understand them; they should be able to explain or defend a position orally, participate in group discussion, and communicate effectively with instructors. These requirements mean that students need massive amounts of language information and they need it in a short time. (Richards, 1976: 84)

How and where then do we begin to help students accomplish their goals? Most ESL students entering our education systems at this level have a certain basic knowledge of English. They are not learning from a zero base. They already know something about the grammatical and rhetorical structures of English. But, one of their most urgent needs at this point is a greater command of words. Students need, first, a useable or active vocabulary for production, that is for demonstrating on written and oral exams and in class discussions what they know about the subject matter they are studying. Moreover, they need an even greater passive vocabulary for recognition, that is for accurate compre-

hension of volumes of reading. lectures, and class discussions. (Twaddell 1973) In short, they need the vocabulary that Shaughnessy terms the vocabulary of "general literacy." (1977: 217)

Further, for students to both learn and acquire vocabulary necessary to cope with academic situations in a short time, Shaughnessy (1977: 210) suggests three avenues: 1) learning about words - - learning their physical, grammatical, and semantic properties, which, in turn, make word analysis possible; 2) learning words - - abosrbing specific words into active vocabulary; and 3) learning a sentivity to words - - developing an awareness of the processes by which exact word choices are made.

Since "what students actually do in class is what they learn to do," according to Prator (1980: 22), we take Shaughnessy's approach one step further and add that students need strategies and methods for learning words, learning about words, and learning a sensitivity to words. Strategies, rather than meaningless, extensive word lists and practice with isolated contexts, seem to be a solution to freeing ESL language learners and allowing them to amass larger vocabularies in shorter periods of time. This approach involves using "all proven techniques associated with all methods as part of a vast store of resources upon which we can draw in accordance with students' specific purposes at a given time." (Prator 1980: 22) Thus, for the purposes of ESL students in higher-level education, an integration of strategies into a total curriculum is desirable. This integration necessarily involves both learning strategies and acquisition strategies.

Learning vocabulary - - what students usually do in the conscious, formal setting of the classroom - - promotes an immediate and accurate accumulation of words. Learning is structured by the selection of clearly

defined elements such as rules, followed by presentation of new items, memorization, pattern practice, testing, and perhaps some communication, though that often in a contrived context. Since ESL students functioning in a regular classroom are often attempting to assimilate information with a certain amount of interference, whether it be misunderstanding of the language through lack of language exposure or through classroom activity such as talking or noise, "knowledge of the rules," says Spolsky, "is the principle factor in understanding a message with reduced redundancy." Further, "knowledge of the rules underlies both active and passive vocabulary performance." (1980: 35) Thus, strategies for learning vocabulary help the ESL student. Learning about words and learning words fall primarily into this framework. However, without continuous, meaningful use, learned vocabulary is quickly lost or forgotten.

Therefore, ESL students need strategies for acquisition of vocabulary as well. Acquisition constitutes meeting "words in the full context of some kind of genuine human communication." (Stevick 1980: 22) Learners enter into communication, such as conversation, about things they know and understand. They have a familiar repertoire into which they can fit new bits and pieces, new meanings, and new words. Acquisition, then, does not involve conscious focusing as does learning but rather it is a subconscious internalization. Through participation in natural communication, words become relatively permanent, though usually over extended time or with repeated exposure. Gaining a sensitivity to words develops most naturally in this framework. On the other hand, when the mode of language intake is acquisition alone, the learners' ability is often error-ridden.

Consequently, the speed of word intake and the accuracy of the

monitor that result from the learning strategies coupled with plentiful opportunities for acquisition of more permanent vocabulary through natural communication constitute the ideal balance in curriculum and classroom. (Krashen 1980, Stevick 1982) The strategies included here reflect a combination of these modes and complement the four stages of language development, defined by Vallette and Disick (1980: 59), that students go through in the learning-acquisition process. The four stages are: 1) mechanical skill - manipulation of pattern with emphasis on form. 2) transfer of pattern - application/extrapolation with emphasis on meaning. 3) true communication - understanding and production - automatic use of pattern. 4) creative use of the language - true fluency.

Students do not necessarily progress from one stage to another in linear fashion, but rather, use elements of the four stages at once each with varying degrees of skill. They may be said to be functioning primarily in stage one-mechanical skill - and with that have only limited use of stage four - creative use of the language.

Our task is to help students increase their levels of vocabulary competence and become more secure in manipulating these four stages relying less on the teacher - - and more on themselves.

What are the learning strategies that complement the stages of language development? Stern (1980: 54-71) identifies several strategies employed by successful language learners. The first, a personal learning style employing positive learning stategies, is essential to each stage of language learning. As part of the strategy, Stern suggests that students develop specific study, memory, analysis and note taking skills, use a variety of sensory stimuli, determine effective methods to classify, analyze, and locate information, and develop methods to define, organize,

and synthesize information.

The second strategy, also crucial to all four stages of language learning, requires that students take an active approach to the learning task and take deliberate steps to involve themselves in the second language. In this integrated vocabulary approach, oral, written, reading, and listening activities are progressively and systematically used to facilitate active learning. Students are asked to take dictation using prescribed vocabulary, read to encounter new as well as familiar vocabulary and converse using the newly acquired vocabulary. Such tasks raise the learners' level of vocabulary consciousness.

In concert with this active approach, learners also need a tolerant, outgoing approach to the target language. When learners are willing to immerse themselves in the language and are responsive to a variety of learning strategies and their subsequent activities, they will move more rapidly from the stages of manipulating form and attending to meaning to the stages of true communication and creative use of the language. Such an attitude requires that learners strive to be uninhibited in their attempts to use the new language and practice the new vocabulary, a task particularly difficult for adult learners.

The concept of mimicry or imitation of the native speaker is a significant means to develop this outgoing approach because as Nida (1957: 22-23) states, mimicry has three aspects: 1) it requires acute and constant observation, 2) it requires throwing the self into the task, and 3) it requires continual practice. We build upon this concept directly as students learn about words, in Level 1 of the model on page 16. At this level, student focus is primarily in the stages of mechanical skill and transfer of pattern.

During these stages students also practice arranging and sorting

words. Consistent, systematic practice, another learning strategy, is particularly vital to language learning during the mechanical and transfer of pattern stages. Without sufficient memorization and imitation practice, students will not move to the true communication stage quickly. As students practice manipulating verb forms to create noun forms, they begin to recognize syllabic construction and differentiate one or two syllabled words. Having these skills, they are able to categorize word groups according to a systematic, logical format making their retention and recall of new words more effective.

By the order in which we assign information then, teachers function as catalysts for developing learning styles and, therefore, we assign information that moves from the simple to complex, the known and unknown, and takes advantage of the students' previous learning. Students who are able to analyze words in terms of their grammatical form as well as their contextual meaning are able to read more efficiently and with increased understanding thereby developing sensitivity to words more rapidly also.

Another means for students to learn about words is to know rule formations and be able to see word relationships. Such rule learning enables students to: 1) make prediction about unfamiliar words - focus on meaning; 2) generate words that take the same prefix/suffixs form - focus on production; 3) observe the structure of words as they are encountered - focus on meaning; 4) practice word class shifts in the context of phrases and sentences - focus on production/creation. To develop these skills, we teach patterns of word formation that build and provide students with a large number of words for their general vocabulary.

Students must learn the formal ways in which words shift in meaning by the presence of prefixes and suffixes in systematic order. According to Shaughnessy (1977: 212), meanings of many prefixes may be too various for production paradigms, lists of suffixes too lengthy to be memorized (therefore they are relegated to rote memorization) if presented all at once. Yet, the ability to see that words can be broken down into smaller units increases learner control over words. Therefore, we suggest an order to the teaching of prefixes and suffixes which provides learners with access to a large number of word meanings. (See model, Levels I and II.) For example, James Brown's master word table incorporates 14 master words and 20 prefixes which creates more than 14,000 words in Webster's Dictionary (Shaughnessy, 1977: 215).

Suffix learning is also crucial to vocabulary development because an understanding of basic suffix forms quickly increases a student's recognition vocabulary. Therefore, in Level I of the model, the simple verb suffix forms "ize," "ate," "ify," and "en" are introduced.

Early introduction to these formation rules enable intermediate and advanced vocabulary students to practice higher order word development as they create three and four syllable words from the earlier learned prefixes and suffixes. Through regular practice, students begin to see patterns to word formation and can translate the use of these patterns to the development of other words. Their analytical and inferential skills are also strengthened by such basic word development. By learning about words, students can independently learn new words.

Formalized practice is essential when students study word building and are required to attend to "affix" learning. Students must be willing to work through memorization exercises as part of the mechanical-manip-

ulative stage in order to use these forms to discover meaning to use for their own production. To facilitate such practice, teachers organize terms in categories - pieces of equipment, scientific terms, business terms, abstract terms, etc., so that the vocabulary studied is related to the specific needs of the students and is composed of terms that will be encountered in other university settings.

The sheer volume of words ESL students need to learn demands that a new criteria be used to determine an order in which to present new vocabulary. As teachers go about selecting words for study, they should remember to choose words which are 1) useable within the student's grammatical knowledge and 2) useful to a student's needs both present and future (Judd, 1978: 73). Selections then, should be grouped so that students develop their own strategies for meaningful learning and employ systematic, regularly-spaced practice sessions. Level I students are introduced to words related to basic, everyday vocabulary. They begin by associating these terms with the words for each in their native languages. Thus, students use their experiential skills to learn new terms. In class, these skills are reinforced by providing practice which moves the students beyond the word recognition stage to the production stage.

It is relatively easy for students to learn large numbers of general words, or what we term "survival vocabulary," because it is just that - - survival vocabulary essential to daily activities. The more difficult task is to ensure that students learn, with similar success, the vocabulary not necessary to daily survival but essential to English fluency. In designing class assignments to provide practice in learning definition and function words, the teacher must be sure that new terms are presented

in a logical and systematic way (See models). Furthermore, the teacher should be sure that 1) the items be meaningful, that is, appropriate to the students' age, interest, and educational background; 2) the situations under which these terms are used are clearly defined for the student; and 3) the people with whom these words are used must be clearly defined.

Such presentation by the instructor gives students increased opportunity for systematic practice. Vocabulary acquisition, then is based on a building process. For example, words related to the root form "manu" and "port" are introduced through modified drill and memory exercises which are presented in a business management reading exercise incorporating words using these forms. Following the reading, students are asked questions about the article to elicit oral responses (in sentence form) using the related words. With such an exercise, the instructor can verify 1) word pronunciation, restating correctly as needed, 2) word usage - determining if a term is correctly or incorrectly used in a sentence for phrase, and 3) word connotation or denotation - determining if shades of meaning are understood.

As students acquire new vocabulary, they move more and more into the stage of true communication; they have opportunities to practice the new vocabulary in realistic situations, and take changes in insecure language settings. While many adult learns feel insecure taking such risks, they must take them in order to have opportunities to hear the repetition of vocabularly in a natural linguistic setting. Real language fluency is not achieved until the learner has control of the lecixon for practical communication.

Moving students beyond the pattern transfer to true communication

and creative use of the language means developing assignments that incorporate real-life situations. Students carry out tasks which provide open-ended situations requiring them to use their newly acquired vocabulary spontaneously rather than just recognize it.

Reading and writing assignments may be designed to stretch students' vocabulary building skills further by assuring that they will encounter new words for which they must, in turn, determine contextual meanings. Several options are available to students as they try to discover word meanings. They may rely solely on the dictionary - using only minimal learner independence, or they may try to analyze words-relying on their inferencing skills.

When students practice their inference skills rather than relying solely on dictionary use, they are practicing yet another useful strategy, a willingness to experiment with the language and its component parts. This willingness to experiment is exhibited when the learner is willing to form hypotheses, discover rules and determine relationships, organize information into systems, and relate new items to those previously learned. As students experiment with the vocabulary, they develop a sensitivity to words and learn that words can be used in a variety of contexts, because as Evans (1978: 13) suggests, "once we master a word, it is connected in our minds with scores of other words in what appear to be an infinite number of relationships and shades of meaning. A new word learned enlarges a whole complex of thinking and is itself enlarged in meaning and significance. If we are well read, we can call up a host of synonyms ... for many words, which suggest more crossfilings."

In vocabulary class, teachers provide writing assignments which help students generate their own content using newly learned words. Depending

on ability and range of vocabulary, students may be given a series of words to describe a scene, define a complex abstraction, or compare items or events. Such tasks enable learners to actively practice many vocabulary skills at the same time. They are required to produce (part of true communication) as well as attend to form and meaning.

Armed with the necessary tools for independent production and interferencing, (rules for use of prefixes/suffixes and word formation, understanding of word relationships, and understanding of word context signals such as sentence design) students are able to employ another learning strategy, the search for meaning. They employ trial and error techniques and seek explanations for word usage as it relates to context or situation. Students using such skills as part of their vocabulary are able to look for more than surface meaning; they are able to analyze word connotation. The student is able to move beyond learning words and learning about words to become sensitive to words - - into the stages of communication and creative use, true fluency.

To strengthen this learning strategy requires that teachers give students extensive contextual practice enabling them to use their analytical, rule oriented skills in reading/writing situations. In writing, sensitivity to words is further increased as students go through the process of precise word selection. Terminology is thus determined by appropriateness. As students work through their repetoire of strategies to determine word choice - use of synonyms, antonyms, general forms, they are continuously experimenting with words to determine if these words suit their purposes. In class, then, students need opportunities to practice substitution. For example, students are given a passage of text and are asked to provide suitable substitutes for underlined words. They have the opportunity to defend their choices or analyze and explain how the context changes in

terms of the overall meaning of the passage.

Students in the communication and creation stages should be given numerous reading opportunities to develop word sensitivity. Students develop a sense of the words' shades of meaning as they read and try to become aware of the thinking of the writer. In selecting reading passages, the teacher can build in opportunities for word repetition and content analysis, further strengthening the students' analytical skills.

As students are given assignments which stress learning vocabulary in context, they are also provided the opportunity to develop another significant strategy - that of self-monitoring. By attending to audience, word form, word choice, and sentence structure, students become increasingly sensitive to language use. This sensitivity enables them to better monitor their own language performance and, thus, develop their language fluency and ability to think and function more easily in the second language.

Using these strategies and methods, coupled with the adult student's experiential base, we provide a curriculum that takes learners from the mechanics of memorization and pattern practice through realistic opportunities for conceptualizing and dynamic use of words.

Figures 1, 2, and 3 represent a model curriculum for three hypothetical levels of vocabulary. The design is based on - -

1) paced activities
2) frequency of item usage
3) sequence of skills
4) movement from simple to complex, known to unknown, and concrete to abstract

The model is arranged in a grid fashion so that all of the skills

and strategies can work in tandem, beginning with learning the more simple and familiar mechanical skills and progressing to the use and production of these items. Within each level, activities develop 1) mechanical skills, with emphasis on form, by using drill practice with words and sentences; 2) transfer of pattern, with emphasis on application and extrapolation focusing on meaning, by using recall and pattern practice with words, sentences, and paragraphs; 3) true communication, with emphasis on understanding and production, by using items in semi-structured, but full context; and 4) creative use, with emphasis on true fluency, by providing opportunities in which students function spontaneously in an unstructured and full context.

Figure 1.

Level I

MODEL VOCABULARY CURRICULUM

Mechanical Skill	Transfer of Pattern	True Communication	Creative Use
Imitate: Sound } simple vowels Spelling } & constants Syllables - 1 - 2 Memorize: Word parts: compounds prefixes - #, size, neg. suffixes - verb, adverb roots - frequently used Definition/function words: verbs - be, mean, show... vague nouns - thing... aff./neg. - any, none, some cohesive - it, he, they prepositions - time, place Basic idioms - v. + prep. prep. + v. Basic word order - svo, vs? Locate: (Bi→Monolingual) Simple definition Spelling/syllabication Pronunciation Key	Repeat: Pronunciation: independent new words with same sound pattern same words in new grammatical pattern Recognize: Dictation: sound/syllabication Visual images: flash cards - new words with recombined parts pictures - naming Underlining: words/word parts - in new context Substitution: familiar content/new words Use: (appropriate responses) commands, questions Find: (Unfamiliar meaning) reading, listening	Function: Open-ended question/ answer situations (oral/written) Meaningful reading listening speaking writing Form: New words - independently in realistic situations - cloze -inferencing -directed discussion Participate: Role play, dialogue, explanation, conversation (structured) Guess: New words in context	Listen: -lectures Take notes Form questions and answers Speak or write: (spontaneous) -individual or group -phone call -open bank account -Boy or Girl Scouts Paraphrase or restate: Text, feelings, observable event

Define: context

Record: new items ——→ Review: new items ——→ Use: new items

Figure 2.

Level II

Mechanical Skill	Transfer of Pattern	True Communication	Creative Use
Imitate: Sound } digraphs, mixed Spelling } vowels, clusters Syllables - 3 - 4, hyphen	Repeat: Pronunciaton: monitor news or lecture - tape summarize observations on tape review & practice	Report: News, lecture, reading to class	Create: News forecast, lecture
Memorize: Word parts: prefixes - time, location, sequence suffixes - noun, adj. roots - Brown's list...	Recognize: Charting word form changes N. V. ADJ. ADV. ATOM -ize -ic -ical +ly	Use: specific words - describe properties of familiar items, scene or event	Interview: (for) Information on a specific subject
Definition/function words: direction-giving verbs - define, compare, list commonly known nouns - events, places, people transitional words- first, next, in addition prepositions - space	Visual images: discussion of films, pictures, events	Exchange: Information through question and answer about reading	Note: Interview responses Interpret and report- on interview (oral/ written)
Idioms - prep. + noun + prep. . .	Skimming and scanning: underline key words	Direct: Give commands or direction to class	Select: Class topic to discuss, debate/ open-ended
Word order/word form	Responding to commands/ written direction	Substitute: New word for unknown - collocation cues	Write: vitaé or resume
Locate: (monolingual) parts of speech multiple meanings synonym, antonym	Guess: Word meanings - context placement	Explain/discuss: Meaning changes with synonym substitution	Participate: Observe or participate in an activity. Discuss it. Write about it
Define: (context) comparison, synonym, summary	Substitute: (look up) synonyms in context	Use: new items	Relate: new items to other words
Record: new items	Identify: (context clues) words in new context		
	Review: new items		

Figure 3.

Level III

Mechanical Skill	Transfer of Pattern	True Communication	Creative Use
Imitate: Rhetorical pattern: problem solving rank, order, alternatives Memorize: Word parts: prefixes, suffixes - multiple use (reinstate) roots - Latin, Greek discrimination Definition/function words: conceptual - theory ... academic verbs - document, trace, synthesize logical relationships - since, if, although, while Analogies: robin: bird:: _____ Word order - syntatic Locate: Derivation (dictionary) Multiple meanings (the- saurus) Determine: Range and register - denotative/conntative figurative Record: new items	Arrange: Given information into P/S pattern Recognize: Massive vocabulary/ word analysis in new contexts, but related to previous ones Distinguish: Identify root forms - reading philosophy, science Guess: Word forms/placement in grammatical pattern Infer: Important information from cues and key words Classify: word families Free association Choose: (appropriate) Word for setting, topic Review: analyze pattern of new word items.	Observe: (read/listen) Problem situation in school, community, nation, world Role Play: Anticipate responses, portray reactions Analyze: Possible solution to problem Revise: Use different vocabulary for change in subject, audience Paraphrase/summary: - problem situation - reading Outline: Stating main points of reading, situation Relate: new items to other topics	Conduct: symposium, seminar Solve: Offer solutions to various parties involved in problem (oral/written) Teach: Explain a concept, a procedure, an attitude Present new material to the class, community group Write: Laboratory instructions, report letters - application, recommendation, personal

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